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# The Election Game Teachers Kit

Published by  
William Francis Galvin  
Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Elections Division



## **The Election Game**

is also available on the Internet at the  
Secretary of the Commonwealths web site:

[www.state.ma.us/sec/ele](http://www.state.ma.us/sec/ele)

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth

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# THE ELECTION GAME

Published by

**William Francis Galvin**

Secretary of the Commonwealth

Elections Division

One Ashburton Place, Room 1705

Boston, MA 02108



**DEAR EDUCATORS:**

The last five years of this century are continuing to show a record number of voters registering in Massachusetts. But there are still hundreds of thousands of eligible citizens who have yet to register to vote. A large percentage of these citizens are young people; therefore we have much work to do in the coming years.

This exercise will help your students connect in some small way to the workings of the elections process. Perhaps this will help reduce some barriers that young people have experienced with government in a fun and educational manner.

The Election Game is a vehicle that teachers can utilize to capture the imagination and attention of students of all ages. But no learning instrument can be effective across the Commonwealth without the able implementation of qualified educators.

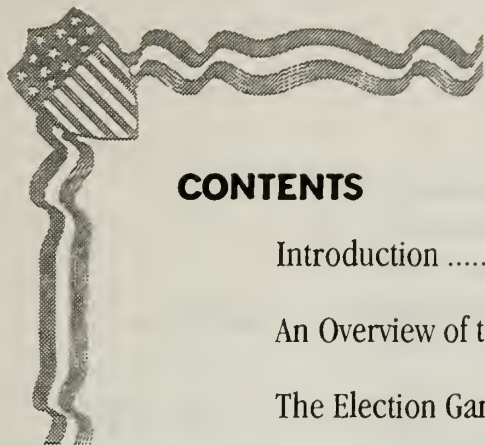
We hope that this program will not only reflect well on your teaching staff but on your school and the Commonwealth as a whole.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM FRANCIS GALVIN

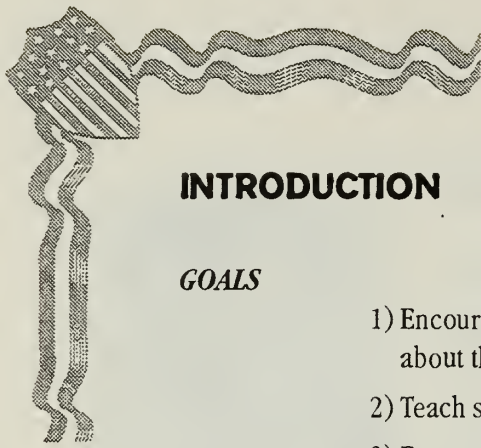
Secretary of the Commonwealth





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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **GOALS**

- 1) Encourage students to REGISTER and vote when they turn 18 by teaching them about the registration process.
- 2) Teach students about government and their role in society within the voting process.
- 3) Encourage parents and eligible family members to register and vote through the Voter Survey.

### **HOW LONG SHOULD THE ACTIVITY LAST?**

The lesson can take as much or as little time as you would like. It can last ten minutes or two weeks. This booklet merely provides you with the ideas and materials. The choice is yours!

### **WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE ELECTION GAME PACKET?**

#### ***I. Voter Survey***

This survey allows students to speak with adults who are eligible to vote and communicate to them the simple procedure about registering and voting. Students too young to register may encourage adults to do so.

**Preparation time:** MINIMAL; Surveys must be copied and Election Basics should be covered. See Overview (pg. 6) for guidance.

#### ***II. THE ELECTION GAME***

The Game consists of four sections: registration, nominations, the campaign, and voting. The game is a mock election which can be a lot of fun for students.

The game can be adapted to teach more than just elections. It can be a lesson in government, sociology, geography, history, writing, media, etc. This can be done by focusing on a particular aspect of the election process or by adapting a theme for the election, either a current issue, policy or re-enacting an historical lesson.

**Preparation time:** MINIMAL; Official papers must be copied and distributed.

#### ***Creative suggestions:***

The game can be just a half hour lesson where an election is conducted or it can be a week long project where students actually conduct campaigns and research topics. During the mock campaign and election, some students may portray candidates, others may work on campaigns while others may act as constituents who voice their concerns. As a teacher, this game gives you the opportunity to be as innovative as you wish. This booklet provides you with suggestions but you should not hesitate to implement your own ideas.

**Preparation time:** AVERAGE; Some research may be required prior to class time.

***Discussion points:***

Following the game, there are many things that can be discussed in the classroom to further educate the students. This can include discussions of close elections in history, how taxes influence everyone, the meaning of democracy compared to other types of government and many other topics. Here again is the opportunity to be creative.

If time constraints do not allow the class to hold a mock election, a discussion of the election process may be used as a substitute. In this booklet, you will find an overview that can be helpful to document some of the suggested lessons. Also, if you have any questions or suggestions, please call the Elections Division at 1-800-462-VOTE.

***Preparation time:*** VARIED; This can depend on teachers' understanding. It is advised to research even things that are familiar so that facts are accurate.

***III. OTHER ELECTION GAME MATERIALS:***

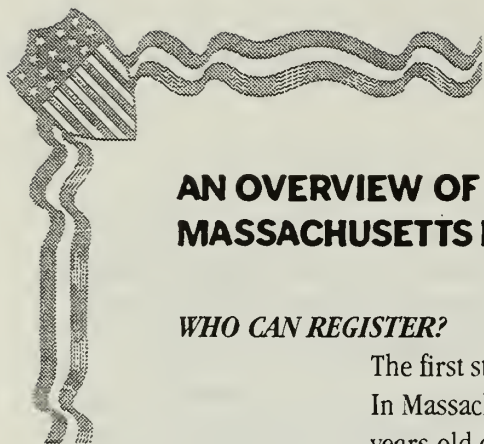
Election Game- Rules for Players	Dictionary
Survey	Poster
Official Nomination Papers	Election Trivia
Official Registration List	Election Course Evaluation
Official Ballot	Order/Reorder Form
Sample Press Release	

***Preparation time for Survey:*** NONE; Ideal for homework assignment to encourage parents to register.

***Preparation time for Dictionary:*** Teachers should make copies of the dictionary and put it together ahead of time.

***For Further Information:***

Contact your school librarian or local librarian. Look in a U.S. history book or in an Encyclopedia. Call your City or Town Clerk or Election Commission. Contact the Elections Division at 1-800-462-VOTE or (617) 727-2828, or visit our web site at [www.magnet.state.ma.us/sec/ele](http://www.magnet.state.ma.us/sec/ele).



## **AN OVERVIEW OF THE MASSACHUSETTS ELECTION PROCESS**

### ***WHO CAN REGISTER?***

The first step toward citizen participation in American democracy is registering to vote. In Massachusetts one must be a resident of the state, a United States citizen, and 18 years old on or before the next election.

### ***IS IT PERMANENT?***

Registration is permanent in our state unless you move to a new city or town. A voter who moves within the same city or town must notify the local election official of their new address. (The list of registered voters in each city and town is updated constantly. As each voter enters the polling place he or she announces their street address and name, the election worker makes a check mark next to their name and the voter proceeds to a voting booth. This system prevents voters from voting more than once.)

### ***WHEN AND WHERE MAY I REGISTER?***

There is no waiting period to be eligible to register to vote. If you move, you may register to vote as soon as you move into your new home.

#### ***You may register to vote:***

- in person or by mail, by completing a mail-in registration form or delivering it to your city or town election office, or
- at any local election office in any city or town in the state and at any registration event you encounter anywhere in Massachusetts, or
- when applying for or renewing your driver's license at the Registry of Motor Vehicles or when applying for service at a designated voter registration agency.

Registration forms are also available at some colleges, universities, high schools and vocational schools.

#### ***How do I register?***

**By Mail:** Mail-in registration forms are widely available. If you cannot find one please call 617-727-2828 or 1-800-462-8683 and a form will be sent to you.

**In Person:** Go to any registration place and complete an affidavit of registration, which must be answered truthfully under the penalty of perjury. The questions on the affidavit will include your name, residence and date of birth.



## ***VOTER SURVEY***

The reasons for low voter turnout are many, but the most frequently cited is the lack of understanding about the registration process.

Students can bring needed registration information to unregistered adults by completing the voter survey and delivering that information to unregistered persons.

### ***How do the students make a difference?***

After you have reviewed how, when and where to register to vote with your students, help them plan their community strategy. For example:

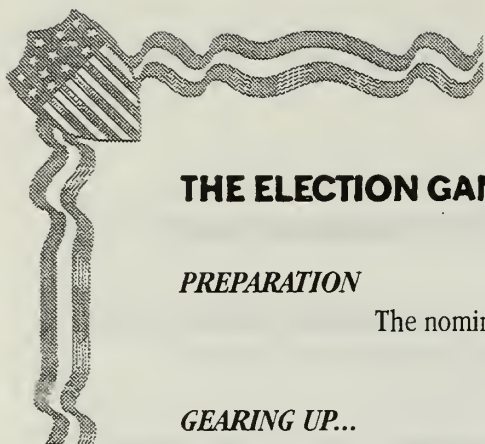
- Students can survey their parents and/or relatives to see how many are registered and plan to vote.
- Students can survey their neighbors in the same way.

Once you have decided whom to survey, the class should set a goal to increase the number of registered voters. Students may offer the button “Get Out and Vote!” to unregistered persons. Direct the students to include information about when and where to register. Call the clerk’s offices to ascertain the details.

Discuss the results of the survey with students and identify reasons people offer for not registering. You may wish to issue a press release to local media about your class election project. (A sample is enclosed.)

As a conclusion you may wish to encourage students to summarize what they’ve learned and take some additional action to promote voter registration. They might write “Letters to the Editor” or become involved in a registration effort with other groups in the community. The students may wish to undertake a public information campaign to make certain all students in the school understand how to register to vote.

What follows in this handbook is a compilation of information that pertains to registering to vote and upcoming elections. We hope that it will help you educate your students about the process.



## THE ELECTION GAME

### **PREPARATION**

The nomination papers and registration lists should be copied prior to class meeting.

### **GEARING UP...**

Before you begin the class election lead your students in a discussion about elections. Be sure to cover all of the material discussed in the overview. This will give students a good idea of the process before they become "players". Help students analyze why people vote, for whom people vote (representatives on all levels and ballot questions.). Discuss why people don't vote. Remind students that voting is only part of the process. One must register 20 days before the election - If you don't register, you can't vote.

### **STEP ONE: CHOOSING AN ELECTION THEME**

1. In this booklet, a variety of themes are suggested. The possibilities for a theme range from the very simple, requiring little or no research, to more sophisticated contests requiring library/community research. Any topic will provide your class with the mechanics as well as an understanding of the electoral process. Plan to spend time at each step to discuss the underlying similarity to the actual election process.

#### ***Theme Ideas***

FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS: favorite pet, favorite food, favorite TV show

FOR OLDER STUDENTS: Class President, the re-enactment of an historical election, creation of a future election.

2. Distribute "Election Game- Rules for Players" to students and ask them to read the instructions for Step one. Requirements for registration should be set so that they will simulate actual voter registration. For example, in order to register, students should meet certain age requirements and residence requirements - must be in 8th grade and have homeroom in room 201. This is the ideal time to communicate the actual requirements and procedures for voter registration. Try to impress upon students that when they are 18 they will be able to register and vote.
3. Designate a student to function as town clerk. This student will register the voters and make sure that they meet the rules of the game.
4. Ask the town clerk to post the "Registration and Voting List". The clerk informs students of the hours and days when they can register.

### **STEP TWO: NOMINATION**

1. Qualifications to be nominated should be set at this time.

#### ***For example:***

A TV show theme: the show must be aired between 8-10 o'clock.

A Presidential candidate: candidates must be 35 years or older.

If a candidate meets the requirements, he/she will be eligible to run.

2. Nomination Papers: A requirement should be set for the number of signatures necessary to appear on the ballot. Nomination papers should be made available to prospective candidates by a particular date.
3. Establish a deadline for the return of nomination papers. Candidates for election or issue proponents who submit the required number of signatures of registered voters by the deadline are candidates whose name will be printed on the ballot.

### ***STEP THREE: CAMPAIGN***

1. Students choose candidates from those nominated and plan a campaign. They can make posters, create commercials and can hold debates. The school newspaper can be utilized for advertisements and editorials. It is a good idea to discuss the effects of the media on the campaign.
2. Hold a candidates' rally and allow students to make speeches in support of themselves or other candidates.
3. Discuss how students may evaluate candidates and guide them towards what qualities they might want to look for in a candidate.

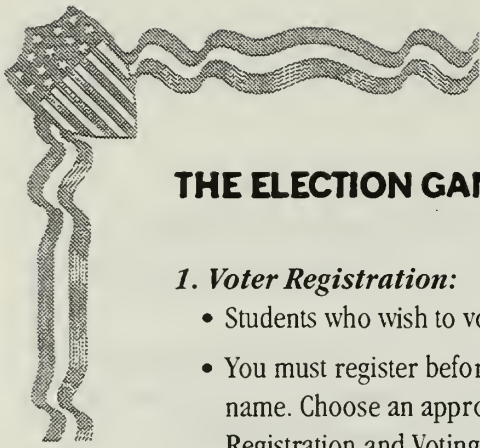
### ***STEP FOUR: VOTING***

1. Post the list of registered voters at the polling place on election day.
2. Designate two students to work at the polling place. They will be election officials who will make sure that the polling place is open and closed at the correct times as well as checking to see that everyone is registered.
3. Set up a polling place and make sure that the voter's privacy will be protected.
4. The clerk checks the name of each person to make sure that they are a registered voter. Then the clerk will distribute one official ballot to each registered voter who presents her/ himself at the polling place to vote. The voter enters the voting booth, votes and places the ballot in the ballot box.
5. Ask the election officials to announce the name of the winner and post the election results.
6. Help students reinforce their new knowledge of elections by examining the results of the class election. If the election was close, it may be important to discuss how important each vote was. Students may also wish to discuss the effectiveness of various campaign strategies and the impact of various issues in the election.

### ***A Sample Ballot***

<b>VOTE FOR ONE CANDIDATE</b>
<b>PRESIDENT</b>
<i>John Olsen</i>
<i>Joe Johnson</i>
<i>Ann Smith</i>





## THE ELECTION GAME RULES

### **1. Voter Registration:**

- Students who wish to vote must be a member of the class to be eligible to vote in the election.
- You must register before the deadline by signing the Registration and Voting List with your full name. Choose an appropriate number of days until a deadline and record at the bottom of the Registration and Voting List.
- Theme. Our class will be voting on the following topic (A person, thing or issue):

---

I have met these requirements and have registered:                      YES                      NO

### **2. The Nomination:**

- After the subject of the election has been chosen, voters may nominate the candidates. Ask for a nomination paper, and then ask the class members to sign the paper. There must be at least five signatures in order for a candidate to qualify.
- Only people who are registered to vote may sign the nomination papers. All completed nomination papers must be returned to the teacher by the deadline.
- The following person, thing or issue has received the required number of signatures to appear on the ballot and has met the requirements set for to become a nominee:

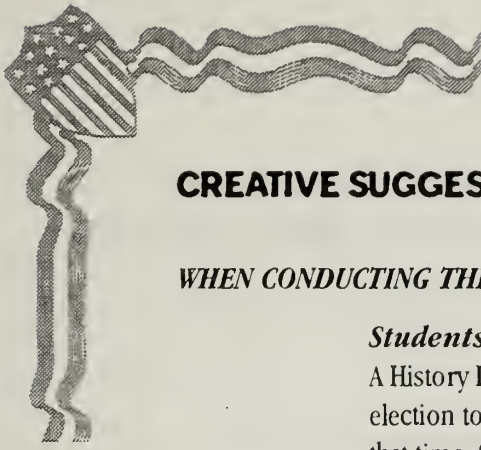
### **3. The Campaign:**

- All of the candidates who qualify are listed on the blackboard.
- Students try to convince class members to vote for their candidates. They may write slogans and design such campaign materials as posters, buttons and stickers.
- Students may give two minute speeches on behalf of their candidates.

### **4. Voting:**

- Election officers check off voters' names. Voters vote and place the ballots in the ballot box.
- When everyone has voted, the election officers open the ballot box, count the ballots, and report the results to the teacher.
- The teacher announces the winner and writes the complete election results on the blackboard.





## **CREATIVE SUGGESTIONS**

### ***WHEN CONDUCTING THE GAME THERE ARE MANY APPROACHES THAT CAN BE UTILIZED***

#### ***Students 6th grade -12th grade***

A History Lesson (or to strengthen research skills) Students may choose a presidential election to re-enact. They can be assigned to research the candidates and the issues at that time. Some good suggestions are:

- Students can learn about electoral colleges by examining the Clinton, Bush, Perot election of 1992. For further information about electoral colleges, contact the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Election Division.
- Students can learn about the Kennedy vs. Nixon election in 1960. One interesting perspective is the debates between the two candidates. They can view and re-enact the debates. Students may find it interesting to see the first televised presidential debates. Many historians have said that for the first time in a campaign, style took on new importance.
- The Truman vs. Dewey election is interesting for students to research because it was such a close election that many newspapers reported that Dewey was the new president, but in actuality, Truman had won.
- Re-enactment of elections with the focus on certain issues such as in 1900 and the farming issue.
- Students can learn about the 15th amendment which forbade any state from denying anyone the right to vote on the basis of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.
- Students can research elections during wartime or during the depression and the issues that dominated the election.

#### ***A Geography Lesson***

Re-enact events of the first democratic elections in Eastern Europe.

### ***OTHER APPLICATIONS OF THE GAME***

#### ***For all grade levels***

Students can re-enact state or local elections. This can be an interesting and fun exercise. Teachers may even contact local political figures and ask them to come speak to the class about their most recent campaign.

Students can elect a class president. They can conduct a registration session and create sample press releases and use this as the basis for the mock election.

#### ***Writing skills***

The mock election can focus on writing skills. Every student can write a speech and this speech can be graded by the teacher. Or the student can present it in front of the class.

***Reading skills***

The mock election can focus on reading skills. The students can read historical speeches used in real campaigns in front of the class.

***Presentation skills***

Students re-enact a debate or create their own.

***Leadership skills***

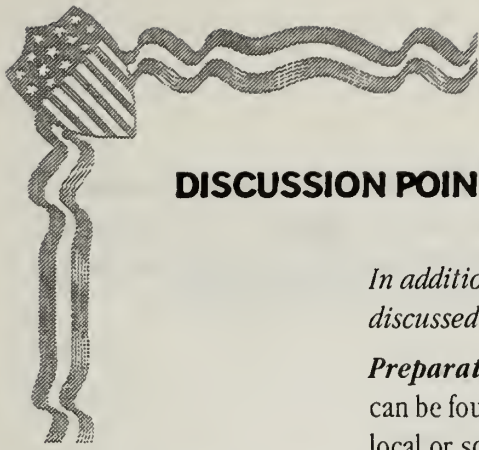
Students hold rallies or mock fund raisers to understand the campaign process.

Students involve other classes during free times and register their classmates as voters.

Hold an election for class officers.

***Artistic Skills***

Students make their own posters, buttons... These materials can be used for campaigning.



## DISCUSSION POINTS

*In addition or instead of the mock election, there are many aspects which can be discussed in order to communicate the importance of voting and registration.*

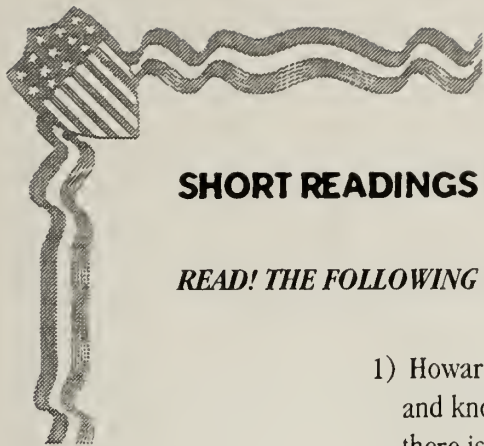
**Preparation:** These topics should be researched prior to class meeting. Information can be found in history books or in an encyclopedia. For further information, contact a local or school librarian for assistance.

- Consider the events that took place during the Fall of 1989 in Eastern Europe. Classroom discussion can include the people's demonstration in order to gain the right to vote. This discussion can focus on people's struggle to attain equal representation and how everyone should exercise his/her right to vote. (This research can be done on Periodical Microfilm in your local library as well as through the Internet.)
- How Laws are Made (*see Order Form*) - Students can learn about what town officials and state officials do and the process by which every citizen can effect the legal process. Explain to students that state representatives and senators can be contacted and that the people have the right to be heard. An effective analogy may be to explain that voters hire people to run their government every election. The election process is similar to a job interview (campaign) and their vote helps decide who is going to work for them at the state house or town or city hall.
- Some good questions to ask are: Where does tax money go? Who pays taxes? Who benefits? What is government spending? Students may be interested to know where the money goes. To start this discussion, students can analyze the sales tax on something that they recently purchased. Explain to them that this money helps to pay for different services that government provides. It is helpful to point out to them from what services they benefit. Also, for a more creative exercise ask students to write a short story about what society would be like without any government services.
- Other Types of Governments: dictatorship, oligarchy, monarchy, anarchy.
- Political Ideologies: democracy, fascism, communism, socialism.
- Voting rights in the United States at different points in time; 1776, 1850, 1920, 1965. This discussion can help students realize the evolution of our society.
- Voter Turnout in other countries can be researched and discussed. In many countries it is a law that everyone must vote. It may be interesting to discuss the laws regarding voting to see if the laws encourage or inhibit voting.
- The effects of the media on the election process. What would elections and campaigns be like without media and publicity? Would people know who is running? Would they be prepared to vote regarding certain issues or for certain candidates? How do people know what is going to be on the ballot or what effects a yes or no vote might have on a certain question?

- The checks and balances in government on all levels. What role does the Supreme Court play in our legal system? Who makes sure that the President or Governor acts responsibly? What recourse of action do the people have if they do not like the job that the government is doing or if they are against a particular law? What is a presidential veto? What is partisanship?
- The risks involved in voting:
  - A. We do not know who our leaders will be in 10 years.
  - B. People may discriminate against others if they support a particular candidate e.g. if an employee supports a different candidate than his/her employer.
  - C. We do not know if a newly elected politician is indeed better than the person that he/she is replacing.
  - D. Some people are fearful of the responsibility of electing an official that has so much power.

Students can discuss campaign funding. This discussion can include the various costs of a campaign: staff, advertisements, headquarters, fundraisers, speaking engagements, volunteers, PACs (for more information contact the Office of Campaign and Political Finance at 617-727-8353).





## SHORT READINGS FOR DISCUSSION

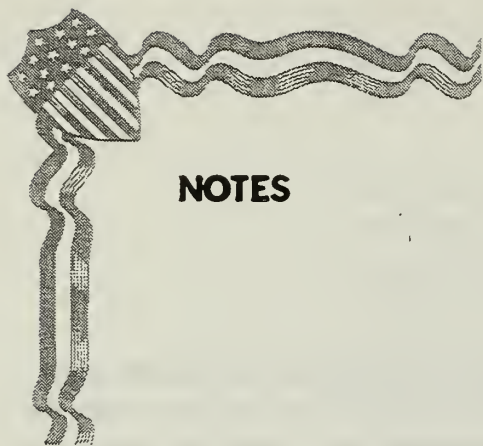
### *READ! THE FOLLOWING SCENARIOS*

- 1) Howard has a job, an apartment and leads a comfortable life. He reads the paper and knows about government on the national, state and local levels. He's angry that there is talk of raising taxes and the town where he lives is cutting back on services such as police, fire and waste management. He also thinks that there is waste in government. He is not a registered voter and says that he doesn't ever get the chance to vote anyway. Besides, he thinks that his vote wouldn't make a difference. Yet, two of his town's selectmen won by less than fifty votes.
- 2) Carol works after school. She was excited when she got the job and figured out how much money she could earn. But when she realized that she didn't bring home as much money as she thought she would, she was very upset. The reason for the difference was because she didn't realize that a lot of her paycheck went to taxes.
- 3) Susan is a state representative. She spends part of her day in hearings and in committee meeting listening and working with state legislation. She also spends part of her day attending receptions and in meetings with local officials. Through the receptions and meetings she develops a sense of what her district wants her to do for them on the state level. When she has time left over, she returns phonecalls from her constituents and tries to help them with their problems or listen to their views on state government.

### *DISCUSSION IDEAS*

#### *Discussion ideas for short readings.*

- 1) This reading can lead into a discussion regarding the importance of registration and voting. This discussion can focus on close elections, participation in local government, and local services.
- 2) Classroom discussion can focus on the taxation process and a discussion of different types of taxes; sales, gas, tolls, income and property tax. The discussion can then lead into the roles of elected officials in distributing the tax money on all levels of government. The class can discuss where the money goes. For example, the gas tax goes to maintain the roads that we drive on every day.
- 3) The class may discuss the breakdown of local, state and national government, their individual duties, and who makes laws on which level. The discussion may also lead to who is effected by these laws.



## NOTES







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# THE ELECTION GAME

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## OFFICIAL BALLOT

*Published by*  
**William Francis Galvin**  
*Secretary of the Commonwealth*

Elections Division  
*One Ashburton Place, Room 1705*  
*Boston, MA 02108*

# R U L E S

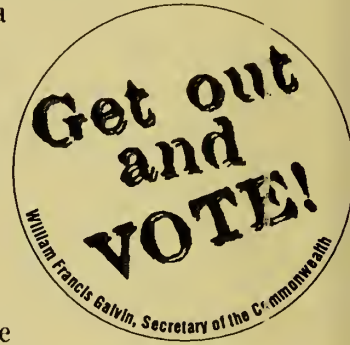
## What you will be doing

The Election Game is designed to help you learn more about elections, a very important subject.

People who care take part in their community life by voting in elections. They elect the people who make decisions that affect themselves and their families.

Voting in elections is one of the best ways for people to show that they care about their city, state and country.

Start getting ready for your voting responsibilities by playing the Election Game.



# F O R P L

1

---

## *Voter registration*

Students who wish to vote must meet two requirements:

- You must be a member of the class to be eligible to vote in the election.
- You must register before the deadline by signing the Registration and Voting List with your full name.

2

---

## *Nomination of candidates*

- After the subject of the election has been chosen, voters may nominate the candidates. Ask for a nomination paper if you wish to nominate a candidate.
- Write the name of the candidate on the nomination paper, and then ask the class members to sign the paper. There must be at least five valid signatures in order for the candidate to qualify. Only people who are registered to vote may sign the nomination papers.
- CANDIDATES MUST sign the written acceptance at the bottom of the official nomination paper.
- All completed nomination papers must be returned to the teacher by the deadline.

# A Y E R S

## 3

---

### *The campaign*

- All of the candidates who qualify are listed on the blackboard.
- Students try to convince class members to vote for their candidates. They may write slogans and design such campaign materials as posters, buttons, and stickers.
- Students may give two minute speeches on behalf of their candidates.

## 4

---

### *Voting*

- Election officers check off voters' names.
- Voters vote and place the ballots in the ballot box.
- When everyone has voted, the election officers open the ballot box, count the ballots, and report the results to the teacher.
- The teacher announces the winner and writes the complete election results on the blackboard.



# OFFICIAL BALLOT

---

School

---

Class

---

Official Election Date

---

Write Your choice here

## **WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED IS HOW TO**

### ***When you are 18:***

- you may vote in any state, city, or national election
- you may run for office

### ***Until then you can:***

- write to your elected officials and let them know y
- work on a real campaign
- conduct a mock local, state, or presidential electi
- encourage people of voting age to register and vo
- read and listen to the news so you will know what

## HOW TO REGISTER AND VOTE

nal election

ent now your ideas about important Issues

nti election in your school

te and vote

know what's happening

# **OFFICIAL BALLOT**





## **ELECTION GAME - RULES FOR PLAYERS**

**1**

### ***Voter registration***

Students who wish to vote must meet two requirements:

- You must be a member of the class to be eligible to vote in the election.
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**2**

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- CANDIDATES MUST sign the written acceptance at the bottom of the official nomination paper.
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**3**

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**4**

### ***Voting***

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- When everyone has voted, the election officers open the ballot box, count the ballots, and report the results to the teacher.
- The teacher announces the winner and writes the complete election results on the blackboard.

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## SURVEY

### VOTER

Are you a registered voter? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If not, why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been registered? \_\_\_\_\_

When did you last vote? \_\_\_\_\_

### PLEASE ANSWER ALL THAT APPLY:

Do you plan to register for the upcoming local election this year? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you plan to register for the September primary? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you plan to register for the November election? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you plan to register for the upcoming Presidential Preference Primary on March 7, 2000? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you have moved, you must re-register!!

**To register to vote you must be:**

18 years of age, a resident of Massachusetts, and a U.S. citizen.

You must register 20 days before an election in order to be eligible.

***You can make a difference ... Register and Vote !!***

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## OFFICIAL NOMINATION PAPER

This is to nominate \_\_\_\_\_  
as a candidate in the class election at \_\_\_\_\_ School  
in, \_\_\_\_\_ Massachusetts.

### *SIGNATURES OF REGISTERED VOTERS*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_

I accept the nomination \_\_\_\_\_

written signature

sign on at least one nomination paper

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## REGISTRATION AND VOTING LIST

<i>FULL NAME</i>	<i>DATE</i>	<i>VOTER CHECK-OFF</i>
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____
8. _____	_____	_____
9. _____	_____	_____
10. _____	_____	_____
11. _____	_____	_____
12. _____	_____	_____
13. _____	_____	_____
14. _____	_____	_____
15. _____	_____	_____

### Deadline for Voter Registration

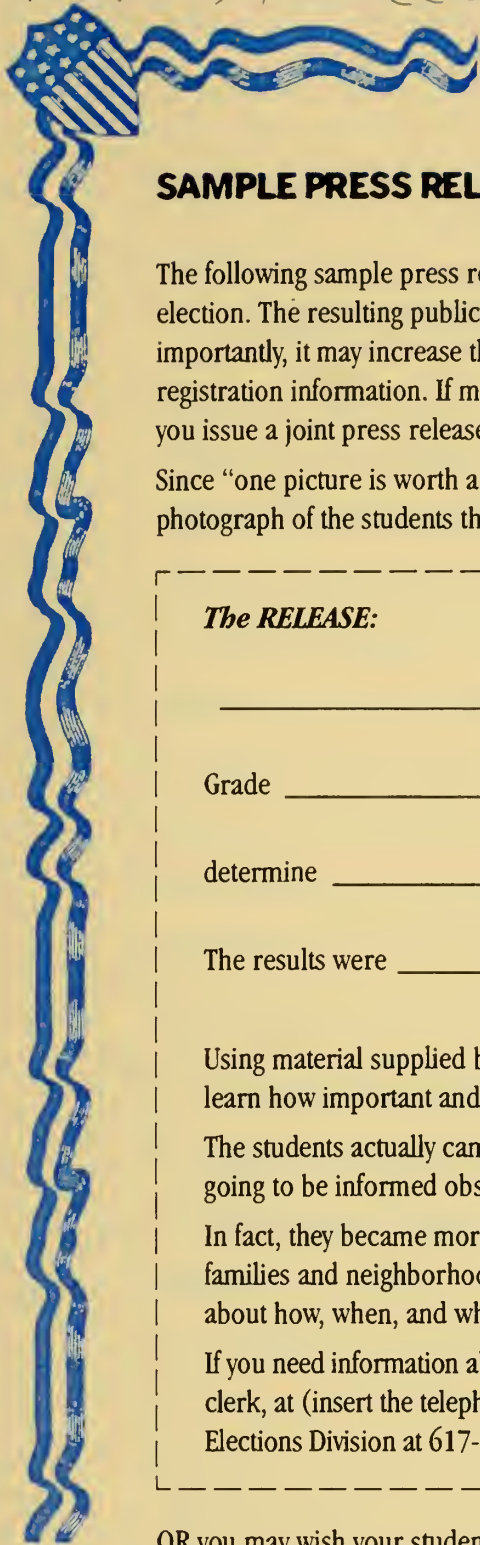
You must register at least \_\_\_\_ days before your election!

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## SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE - FOR TEACHERS

The following sample press release has been prepared to assist you in informing local media about your class election. The resulting publicity may encourage other educators to conduct this activity with their students. More importantly, it may increase the general public awareness of the election process, especially more important voter registration information. If more than one class in your school has participated in THE ELECTION GAME, we suggest you issue a joint press release.

Since "one picture is worth a thousand words" you may wish to increase your visibility by including a black and white photograph of the students that participated.

### ***The RELEASE:***

\_\_\_\_\_ School Students in

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ recently held a class election to  
determine \_\_\_\_\_.

The results were \_\_\_\_\_.

Using material supplied by William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth, the students were able to learn how important and easy it is to register and vote.

The students actually campaigned, complete with posters, buttons, issues and speeches. As a result they are going to be informed observers in this election year.

In fact, they became more than observers and conducted a voter survey to identify those persons in their families and neighborhoods who are not registered to vote. The students gave these people information about how, when, and where to register.

If you need information about how, when and where to register to vote in our community, call the (town or city) clerk, at (insert the telephone number of the clerk) or William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth's Elections Division at 617-727-2828 or 1-800-462-VOTE.

OR you may wish your students to compose their own press release!!!

Remember to include the following at the beginning or end of any press release:

*For further information contact:*

Your name and number

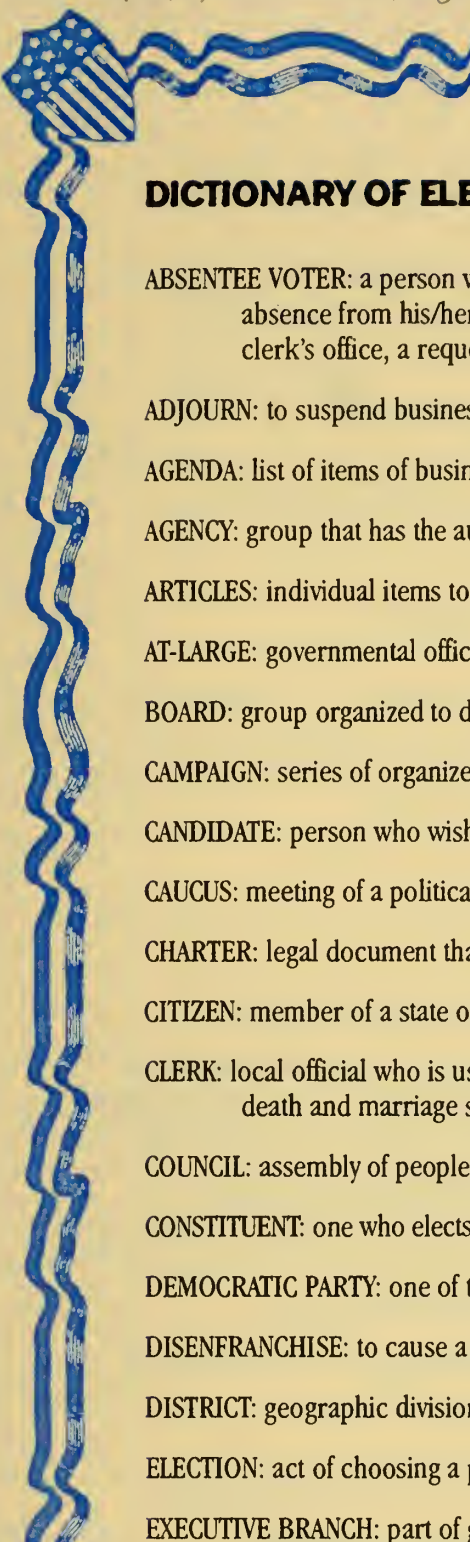
For release on (DATE)

LOCAL STUDENTS CONDUCT ELECTION

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## DICTIONARY OF ELECTION TERMS

**ABSENTEE VOTER:** a person who cannot vote at the polls on election day due to infirmity, religious reasons or absence from his/her city or town; such an individual may vote ahead of time by mail or in person. At the clerk's office, a request to vote absentee must be made in writing to the clerk.

**ADJOURN:** to suspend business

**AGENDA:** list of items of business

**AGENCY:** group that has the authority to act for others in specific matters

**ARTICLES:** individual items to be acted upon by town meeting; the warrant is a list of all the articles

**AT-LARGE:** governmental official elected by voters to represent an entire city or town

**BOARD:** group organized to deal with specific matters

**CAMPAIGN:** series of organized, planned actions for a specific purpose

**CANDIDATE:** person who wishes to become an elected official

**CAUCUS:** meeting of a political party or citizens to decide on policy or to nominate candidates for office

**CHARTER:** legal document that contains rules and regulations of a group

**CITIZEN:** member of a state or nation

**CLERK:** local official who is usually responsible for elections; certifies the results of town meeting; collects birth, death and marriage statistics; issues marriage, fishing and dog licenses

**COUNCIL:** assembly of people called upon for advice

**CONSTITUENT:** one who elects or assists in electing another as his/her representative

**DEMOCRATIC PARTY:** one of the two major political parties in the US

**DISENFRANCHISE:** to cause a person to lose the right to vote

**DISTRICT:** geographic division made for a specific purpose

**ELECTION:** act of choosing a person to fill an office by a vote

**EXECUTIVE BRANCH:** part of government empowered, required to administer laws created by the legislative branch.

**FINANCE OR ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** committee in towns that advises town meeting on each article in the warrant

**GENERAL COURT:** Massachusetts House of Representatives and Senate

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:** one branch of Massachusetts state legislature; it has 160 members from districts of equal population.

**INCUMBENT:** person in present possession of elected office

**LEGISLATIVE BRANCH:** part of government that creates law

**LOBBY:** attempt to convince other(s) to act in favor of or against a special interest



LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIAL: member of local government elected at town/city election; e.g. selectmen, mayors, councilors, school committee members

MAYOR: chief elected official of a city

MODERATOR: local official who presides at town meeting; usually elected

NOMINATION: act of submitting a name for election to office

NON-PARTISAN: not related to or belonging to a political party

OPPONENT: one who supports the opposite side to that put forward

PARTISAN: belonging to or pertaining to a political party

PETITION: formal written request submitted to an authority for benefit or right

POSTPONEMENT: delay to a later time; town meeting articles are often postponed indefinitely or to a specific time

PRELIMINARY: election prior to general election in which no party affiliation is used; conducted to reduce number of candidates

PRIMARY: election prior to general election; party affiliations are used

PRECINCT: subdivision of a city or town

PROPONENT: person who puts forward a cause

PUBLIC HEARING: session at which citizens present their views on a specific matter to a government body

PUBLIC MEETING: assembly of a governmental body to conduct official business; notice of every such meeting must be posted 48 hours prior to the meeting according to Massachusetts General Laws; every such meeting must be open to the public unless the governmental body votes to go into executive session for one of the following reasons: to discuss the reputation or character of an individual, to consider the discipline of an individual, to discuss collective bargaining strategy, to discuss security, to discuss criminal misconduct, to consider real property negotiations or to comply with the provisions of any special act or state or federal law

QUORUM: minimum number of members necessary at a meeting in order to conduct official business

REGISTER TO VOTE: in Massachusetts, an American citizen who is a resident of Massachusetts and is 18 years of age or over.

REPUBLICAN PARTY: one of the two major political parties in the US

SELECTMAN: chief executive officer of a town; elected at town election; usually a board of three to five persons

SENATE: branch of Massachusetts legislature which has 40 members elected from districts of equal size

TALLY: count of votes

TELLER: person appointed to help count votes

TOWN COUNSEL: lawyer who is retained to provide legal advice to town officials

TOWN MANAGER/ADMINISTRATOR: appointed chief executive officer of a town; oversees the day-to-day business

UNENROLLED: registered voter not affiliated with any major political party; informally known as "independent"

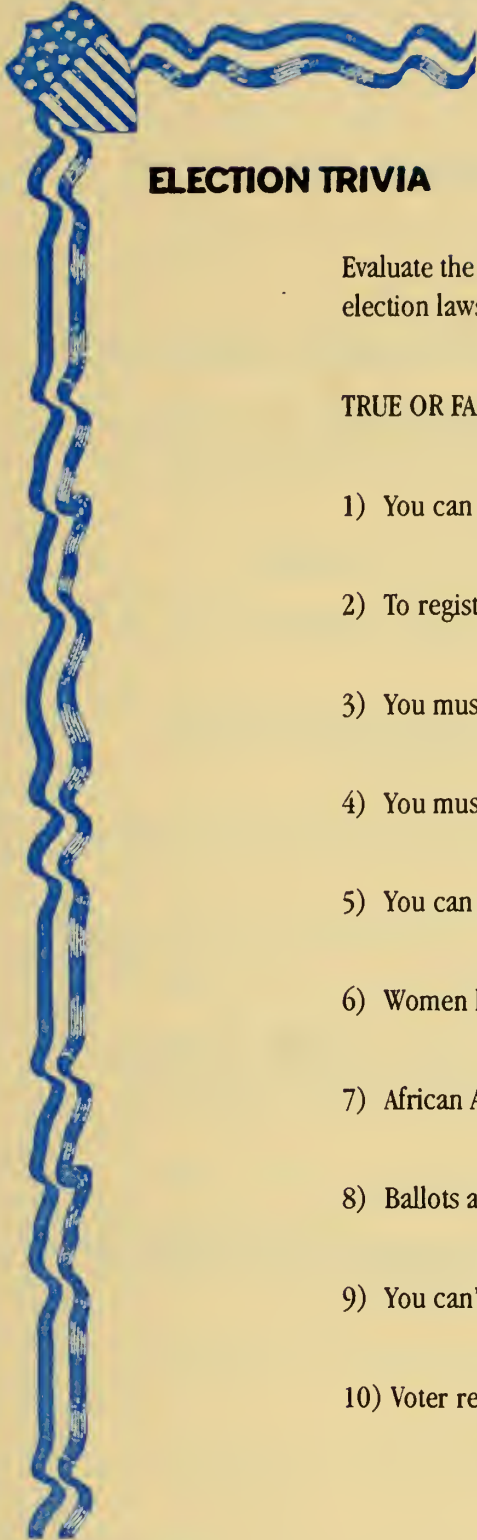
VOTE: decision by one or more persons on a choice between candidates or ideas

WARD: an area of a city that is divided into precincts

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## ELECTION TRIVIA

Evaluate the following statements and check them with the answers to see if you know about election laws.

### TRUE OR FALSE

- 1) You can register by mail.
- 2) To register you don't need your birth certificate.
- 3) You must take a literacy test to vote.
- 4) You must own property to vote.
- 5) You can vote in any town in which you own property.
- 6) Women have always been allowed to vote.
- 7) African Americans have always been allowed to vote.
- 8) Ballots are only printed in English.
- 9) You can't register to vote until you are 21 years old.
- 10) Voter registration has nothing to do with being chosen for jury duty.



## THE FACTS

### ANSWERS

- 1) True. Due to the passage of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, citizens can register by mail.
- 2) True. To register no form of identification needs to be presented. But one signs the affidavit of registration form under the penalties of perjury . You can pay a fine and/or go to jail if you lie on this form.
- 3) False. In order to register, you do not need to be able to read or to read English.
- 4) False. To register you only need to be a citizen of the US, a resident of Massachusetts, and 18 years of age by the next election.
- 5) False. You can only be registered in one place in the country. Property does not matter in Massachusetts. You can only register in the city or town in which you live.
- 6) False. Women were not permitted to vote until 1920. The 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution gave women the right to vote.
- 7) False. The 15th amendment to the constitution, ratified in 1870, forbids states to deny the right to vote bases on race, color or previous condition of servitude.
- 8) False. Federal regulation requires ballots to be printed in Spanish in voting districts whose Hispanic population is a certain percent of the general population. This percentage is calculated by a certain formula.
- 9) False. Anyone 18 or older may register to vote in the United States.
- 10) True. Many people believe that if you register to vote you may be called upon for jury duty. This is not true. Jury duty selection is based upon residence, not registration status.

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## ELECTIONS COURSE EVALUATION

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

1. Grade level \_\_\_\_\_

2. Number of students using the course. \_\_\_\_\_

3. What was the subject of your class election? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Did you work on part II (community outreach) as well? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Were the instructions and the materials easy to understand and use by the teacher? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Were the instructions and the materials easy to understand and use by the students? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Was there enough detail or was the course too simple? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Did the students enjoy participating in the course? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you think that their awareness of the election process was heightened? \_\_\_\_\_

10. What did the students like best? \_\_\_\_\_

11. What did the students like least? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Please share any comments, criticisms and suggestions you have about the course.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Mail to:* Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Elections Division  
Attn: John Barr  
One Ashburton Place - Room 1705  
Boston, MA 02108

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## ORDER/REORDER FORM

Below is a reorder list of free materials available for the Election Game as well as the following educational resources available from the Secretary of the Commonwealth:

**Massachusetts Facts\*** - A review of the history, government, and symbols of the Commonwealth.

**Color Massachusetts** - A coloring book for third graders to help them learn about our state's government, history and symbols. A separate *Teacher's Lesson Plan* accompanies the coloring book.

**What's Under the Golden Dome?** - This publication for elementary school graders takes students on a short walking tour of the State House.

**The Ladybug Story** - An explanation of how a bill becomes a law told in story format for elementary school graders.

**Lawmaking in Massachusetts\*** - A comprehensive review of the lawmaking process for residents in the state.

\*Also available on the Secretary's web site at [www.magnet.state.ma.us/sec](http://www.magnet.state.ma.us/sec)

Please send me the following:

Quantity	Item
	Election Game Poster
	Election Game Button
	Election Game Ballot
	Massachusetts Facts
	Color Massachusetts
	What's Under the Golden Dome?
	The Ladybug Story
	Lawmaking in Massachusetts

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your request to:

Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Elections Division  
Attn: John Barr  
One Ashburton Place - Room 1705  
Boston, MA 02108

or e-mail to: [jfatta@tiac.net](mailto:jfatta@tiac.net)

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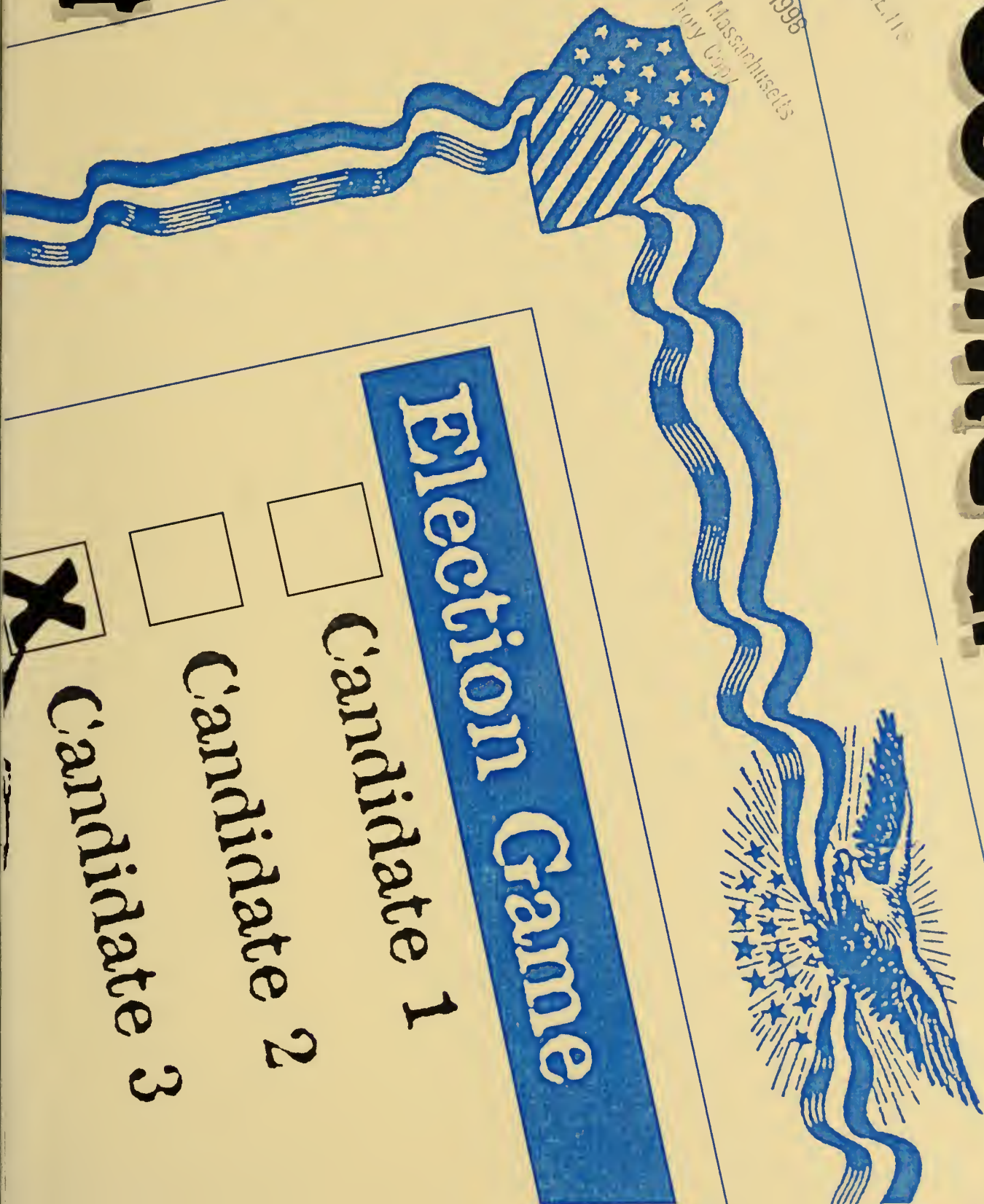
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## Election Game

☐ Candidate 1

☐ Candidate 2

☒ Candidate 3

# Get

MASS. SS 7.2: EL 25 insert 12





**out  
and**

**VOIE**



**ELECTIONS DIVISION**

**William Francis Galvin**

**Secretary of the Commonwealth**





Get out  
and

**VOTE!**

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth



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